

Volunteer Handbook

National Gallery of Art

Revised March 2014

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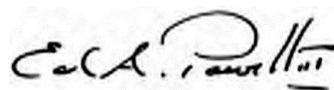
Letter from the Director

Dear National Gallery Volunteers,

The National Gallery of Art is one of the premier art museums in the world, with a renowned collection of American and European masterworks and a diverse schedule of exhibitions. The exceptional efforts and contributions of all Gallery staff and volunteers enable us to sustain the high standards of quality and service to the nation that were established at the Gallery's founding.

We are very grateful for your contribution to our public mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Earl A. Powell III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Earl" and last name "Powell" being more prominent, and "III" written as a subscript.

Earl A. Powell III
National Gallery of Art

National Gallery of Art

History

In 1937, when noted statesman and philanthropist Andrew W. Mellon donated his private art collection to the nation, President Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted the gift for the United States. Mr. Mellon also provided funds for a building to house the collection as well as a generous endowment to support certain key activities. Since then, the National Gallery of Art has grown to include around 100,000 objects and now attracts some six million visitors a year.

The original museum, designed by John Russell Pope and known as the West Building, opened in 1941. The East Building, housing the Gallery's contemporary art and special exhibitions, was designed by I. M. Pei and opened in 1978. The Sculpture Garden, which opened in 1999, is located in the 6.1-acre block adjacent to the West Building. The elegant yet informal garden includes native American species of canopy trees, flowering trees, shrubs, ground covers, and perennials. A fountain, which serves as an ice rink in winter, is at its center, and walking and seating areas offer visitors a chance to rest and reflect on the works on view.

The Gallery does not use public funds for the acquisition of art. All works in its collection have been given by private donors or purchased with privately donated funds. However, in accepting Mr. Mellon's original gift, Congress pledged to maintain the building and pay staff for its operations. Today, the federal government and private benefactors continue to make it possible for the Gallery to operate without charging admission fees to the public.

Although established as a bureau of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery is an autonomous and separately administered organization governed by its own Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees comprises a chairman, a president, and three other trustees who appoint the executive officers of the Gallery: the director, deputy director, administrator, treasurer, secretary-general counsel, external affairs officer, and dean of the Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts (CASVA).

Mission

The mission of the National Gallery of Art is to serve the United States of America by preserving, collecting, exhibiting, and fostering the understanding of works of art, at the highest possible museum and scholarly standards.

The following general definitions are intended to explicate the goals of the Gallery:

Preserving. The Gallery's principal duty is to keep its collections intact and in optimum condition for future generations. To carry out this responsibility, the Gallery strives to maintain effective programs of security, environmental control, building maintenance, and conservation.

Collecting. The Gallery limits its active art collecting to paintings, sculpture, and works of art on paper from the late Middle Ages to the present, from Europe and the United States. Trustee policy allows the Gallery to accept, in addition, other significant works of art in conjunction with major donations in the primary areas of the Gallery's collections.

Exhibiting. The Gallery is dedicated to putting its collections on view in Washington and by loan elsewhere, as well as borrowing works of art for exhibition in Washington. As its collecting field is narrow in comparison to the world's art, the Gallery strives to supplement its holdings with exhibitions that illuminate the Gallery's own collection.

Fostering Understanding. The Gallery is dedicated to fostering an understanding of works of art on multiple levels. Advanced art historical research is conducted both by Gallery curators and at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts. The Gallery also strives to disseminate knowledge in the arts to the widest possible audience through its many educational programs. The Gallery recognizes the value of enhancing the aesthetic experience of the collection and thus regularly pursues ancillary projects, such as concerts and changing horticulture displays, which have been part of the Gallery's strategy to fulfill its mission since its inception.

History of Volunteer Programs at the National Gallery of Art

Tours for School Groups and Adults

In 1950 the National Gallery of Art formed a partnership with the Junior League of Washington to create a docent program. Initial interpretations of the Gallery's status as a government agency suggested that it was not officially permitted to accept docents. The establishment of a docent program would be possible, however, through affiliation with outside organizations. Sixteen Junior League members were in the first class trained by the Gallery to offer three different tours to art students in the District of Columbia public high schools.

The next year, the supervisor of art for Arlington County schools worked with the chairman of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in Arlington to establish tours for Arlington County school children. The program generated much interest, and in 1955, the Montgomery County AAUW began promoting similar tours for children in their area. Two years later, Prince George's County AAUW joined the docent program and began tours for Prince George's students. Eventually the program in Arlington, Virginia expanded to include other AAUW county branches and the committee was renamed Northern Virginia.

Legal interpretations of how the Gallery's federal status affects docents changed over time. The various docent groups gradually came under the direct aegis of the National Gallery of Art. In 1990, affiliation with the Junior League and the AAUW was no longer required. Currently National Gallery of Art school docents give tours to thousands of pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade students each year on more than a dozen different topics.

In 1974, The Hospitality and Information Service (THIS), a group of docents dedicated to Washington's diplomatic community undertook sponsorship of the Foreign Language Docent Committee. The new endeavor marked the first time docents served an adult audience at the National Gallery of Art. This group of active docents offers tours in twelve different foreign languages. Another cadre of docents was recruited in 1989 to serve a different constituency—adult visitors interested in general tours of the East and West Buildings. The Adult Docent Program has expanded its tours to focus on the Renaissance, French, American, and sculpture sections of the permanent collection.

Art Information Volunteers

The Art Information Volunteer Program in the Division of Education was established in 1984. Art Information Volunteers staff the information desks at Gallery entrances to welcome visitors and inform them about the Gallery's collections and special exhibitions. Volunteers also provide directions in the Gallery and advise on Gallery policies; they distribute a variety of printed material about programs, exhibitions, and collections; and they conduct regular surveys, gathering visitors' questions and other data about audiences.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Gallery Archives, Horticulture, and the Library also offer limited opportunities for volunteer participation.

General Information

Location: Between 3rd and 9th Streets on Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Mailing Address: National Gallery of Art
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

Telephone: (202) 737-4215

Fax: (202) 789-2681 (Administrator's office)

Internet URL: www.nga.gov

Hours: Monday–Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Closed: December 25 and January 1

Admission: Free at all times

West Building Entrances:

- 6th Street and Constitution Avenue NW (wheelchair accessible)
- Madison Drive between 4th and 7th Streets NW (off the National Mall)
- 7th Street between Constitution Avenue and Madison Drive NW
- 4th Street between Constitution Avenue and Madison Drive NW

East Building Entrance:

- 4th Street between Constitution Avenue and Madison Drive NW (wheelchair accessible)

Sculpture Garden

- between 7th and 9th Streets NW, on the National Mall (wheelchair accessible)

Accessibility:

<http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/visit/accessibility.html>

The Gallery welcomes individuals with disabilities and provides physical access, events and programs for individuals who need accommodations. Accessible parking is available on the 4th Street plaza, in front of the Mall entrance to the West Building, and just past the Sculpture Garden on Madison Drive.

- Wheelchairs and strollers are available on a first-come, first-served basis at all entrances. Exhibition spaces and public facilities are accessible by elevator. Elevator use by visitors with disabilities may require assistance. The Gallery's free *Brief Guide and Plan*, which lists all accommodations including accessible restrooms, can be obtained at any Information Desk in the East or West Buildings. Floor plans of the East and West Buildings showing these accommodations can be found online.
- Programs for Visitors with Disabilities: The Gallery offers tours in American Sign Language, with voice interpretation into English, on the second Sunday of each month. Tours with an emphasis on verbal description of the West and East Building collections are offered on the fourth Wednesday and fourth Saturday of every month at 1 p.m.
- ASL Video Tour: Discover 26 essential works in the collection of the National Gallery of Art through a video tour conducted in ASL. The tour is available on all Gallery Acoustiguide devices, which may be borrowed free of charge at the Acoustiguide desk in the West Building Rotunda. Printed instructions for borrowing and using the devices are also available. The ASL videos are also available online.
- Special Tours, Audio Devices, and Print Materials: Interpreted tours for visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing and guides for visitors who are blind or partially sighted are available upon advance request for tours of the permanent collection as well as for special exhibitions. The Gallery offers printed scripts of all recorded tours, and free large-print brochures are available at the entrance to some of the special exhibitions. Large headphones, which deliver full-frequency, amplified digital audio sound in a lightweight design, are offered at the recorded-tour desk for special exhibitions that have an Acoustiguide tour and for the Director's Tour. Both East Building auditoriums are equipped with special auditory systems. Receivers and neck loops necessary to access these systems can be borrowed from the information desk located on the ground level of the East Building. The Lecture Hall in the West Building is similarly equipped with a special auditory system. Receivers and neck loops for this space can be borrowed from

the information desk at the 6th Street and Constitution Avenue entrance to the West Building.

- Closed-Captioned Films: Films shown in conjunction with special exhibitions are closed captioned. A closed-caption button is located at the entrance to every film viewing space within special exhibitions. A closed-caption button is also located at the entrance to the East Building small auditorium for all films related to special exhibitions.
- Braille Automatic Teller Machine (ATM): A braille ATM is available near the Concourse Book Shop. An ATM near the West Building Gift Shop also fully complies with regulations defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. This ATM has Braille as well as audio enhancements with voice guidance.

Policies and Guidelines

Communication

It is essential that volunteers and staff maintain a professional and collegial relationship and that communication be respectful, inclusive, abundant, and clear. Primary modes of communication are via e-mail correspondence, meetings, and education sessions.

Conduct: National Gallery of Art Standards

As representatives of the National Gallery of Art, volunteers are obliged to adhere to the standards of professional conduct established for all National Gallery of Art officers, employees, and volunteers in Circular 36 of March 2005. As defined in the directive, the term “employee” specifically includes volunteers. The relevant articles of the circular state:

A. To assure that the business of the National Gallery of Art is conducted effectively, objectively, and without improper influence or the appearance of improper influence, employees must not only deal in a courteous and effective manner with each other and with the public, but they must also maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality in the performance of their duties.

B. No employee shall engage in commercial soliciting, vending, or advertising or in unauthorized charitable solicitation while on Gallery premises or on duty.

C. Employees have a duty to conduct themselves honestly and responsibly on the job and actively to protect and conserve Gallery property, including equipment, supplies, and other property issued, entrusted, or made available to them. No employee shall use or allow others to use for non-Gallery purposes or for private gain Gallery funds, facilities, or property of any kind, including property leased to the Gallery and including official mail and travel privileges.

Identification Badges

The National Gallery of Art utilizes a card access system to monitor and control entry into and departure from the facility. Persons having a permanent National Gallery of Art identification badge are required to use the card readers when entering the building at the beginning of their work day and when leaving the building at the end of their work day. Identification badges must

be worn whenever you are in the building. Many doors to the nonpublic areas require you to swipe your badge across a computer panel for entrance. These panels are typically marked by the Gallery's logo—a circular image of an eagle.

Identification badges are good for five years and usually expire on the owner's birth date. To renew a badge, please call to make an appointment with the Gallery's ID Office at (202) 842-6788. The ID Office is located at 601 (South Building) Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Second Floor.

If you are away from the Gallery for more than four weeks, your badge will become inactive. Please call the ID Office (202-842-6788) to reactivate your badge.

When your responsibilities as an active volunteer at the Gallery end, your badge should be returned directly to the ID Office, National Gallery of Art, 2000B South Club Drive, Landover, MD 20785.

Door Checks and Property Passes

As a security precaution, National Gallery guards inspect all briefcases, portfolios, and bags as staff and volunteers leave the building. To expedite the procedure, have your bags ready to open for the guards. Property passes are necessary for any Gallery property taken from the building. Typically division heads, department heads, and program coordinators are authorized to sign property passes.

You will also need a pass for any property that belongs to you but could be mistaken for Gallery property, such as a laptop computer, an arrangement of flowers, videotapes, or books. If you purchase a book in the Gallery shops, you may be asked to show your receipt. Wrapped presents and packages must be opened for inspection, even if accompanied by a pass. If you have a gift-wrapped box, a suitcase, or similar item that you do not want to have opened for inspection, you may leave it in the checkroom at the East Building entrance, which closes at 5:00 p.m. You may also leave it in a locked cabinet at the West Building service entrance.

Dress Code

While there is no official dress code, it is suggested that volunteers should dress in appropriate business attire, keeping in mind that they are representing the National Gallery of Art. Shoes with textured soles are recommended.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, notify the nearest guard or contact ext. 6911 from any Gallery phone. The Office of Protection Services will notify and direct the appropriate emergency services personnel to the incident.

In the event of a Gallery-wide emergency or an emergency in downtown Washington, DC, notification messages will be broadcast via the Gallery's Emergency Notification System. An alarm will sound, followed by information and instructions accompanied by strobe lights and beacons. Please follow the instructions in the announcement.

For more information, see the *Employee Guide to Emergencies* published by the Gallery in February 2006.

Health Unit/Medical Assistance

A nurse is on duty Monday–Saturday from 9:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., and Sunday from 10:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. The health unit is located in the Connecting Link in room CLA-60. The nurse can be reached at ext. 6375 or (202) 842-6375 if calling from outside the Gallery. In case of emergency, call ext. 6911 and notify the nearest guard.

Inclement Weather Policy

Listen to local news or radio stations WMAL or WTOP for a list of school closings or delayed openings. The Gallery's Hazardous Weather Line (202-789-4600) will also have information about weather-related closings.

In most cases, if the Gallery is open, volunteer education and enrichment programs will take place. In the event that a session is cancelled, we will send an e-mail to all active docents and volunteers, if possible.

If the Gallery is open to the public, the information desks will be staffed to the extent possible and docent tours will remain on the schedule, but all volunteers should use their own discretion in deciding whether to come to the Gallery.

Lost and Found

For information on lost and found articles, please call (202) 789-4626.

Parking Regulations

The Gallery provides a limited number of parking spaces for Division of Education volunteers on the Fourth Street Plaza of the West Building and in the garage. Parking is not guaranteed and is only available when assigned by staff. Please review the detailed parking policies for your program for more information on parking eligibility, assignment priorities, restrictions, etc.

Press and Public Information

Maximum discretion in imparting information is expected of all volunteers. Press and other outside persons requesting information not routinely provided should be referred to the Press and Public Information Office of the Gallery. Volunteers shall not make use of or permit others to make use of any information obtained during the course of employment that is not available to the general public, including information about the location and movement of works of art or the terms of its acquisition or exhibition, for purposes of furthering a private interest or in any way that could be detrimental to the Gallery. If a volunteer needs to make use of such information, that volunteer needs to obtain the written permission of the Head of the Division of Education prior to such use.

The obligations to protect non-public Gallery information and to be discreet in any references to the Gallery extend to volunteers' use of personal social media activities outside of work. Volunteers further should avoid creating the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the Gallery, either by words, graphics or design, unless they have obtained the prior written permission of the Head of the Division of Education. As with all social media activities, volunteers should remember to use common sense and good judgment, and always assume that their comments and other postings will become public, regardless of the volunteer's intent. These guidelines are not intended to limit or restrict volunteers' right to engage in personal social media activities outside of work using their own electronic equipment, as long as they do so responsibly.

Remuneration

No monetary remuneration may be accepted by volunteers at the Gallery. However, if a visitor wishes to make an unsolicited donation to the Gallery, the volunteer may accept the gift for the Gallery and pass it along to Art Information staff, or advise the visitor to send a check to the Development Office, National Gallery of Art, 2000B South Club Drive, Landover, MD 20785. They may also make donations through the web site at www.nga.gov/support.

No volunteer may engage in commercial soliciting, vending, or advertising or in any unauthorized charitable soliciting while at the Gallery. No matter how worthwhile the cause, such as offering tours of Gallery collections or exhibitions for school, church, or club auctions, fundraising while using the Gallery's name is strictly forbidden.

Volunteers' Visitors

Visitors must sign in and get a visitor's pass at the Study Center guard desk if they enter with you before public hours or will be accompanying you to nonpublic areas of the museum. You are responsible for your visitors, and you should always accompany them in any area of the Gallery, including public spaces, when the Gallery is closed, and at all times while in nonpublic areas.

You may not take visitors into exhibition galleries or special exhibitions before public hours. You are welcome to take them to the cafeteria, where breakfast is served after 8:00 am on weekdays.

Be sure that your visitors sign out and return the pass to the Study Center desk when they leave.

Benefits

Credit Union

As a volunteer of the National Gallery of Art, you are eligible to join the Agriculture Federal Credit Union. For more information, please visit www.agriculturefcu.org.

Dining Options

The *Refectory* is located on the Seventh Level of the East Building, to the left as you exit the elevators, and is open to all Gallery staff, including interns and volunteers. Its hours are Monday–Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. for coffee, and 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. for lunch. Reservations are not required, but if you are planning to bring a guest and want a private table, you may reserve one by calling ext. 6554. Unless you have reserved a private table, you should sit at the long table or out on the terrace, which has a lovely view of the National Mall. The tables on the terrace are first come, first served. You may not bring your own food into the Refectory.

The *Cascade Café*, located in the Connecting Link, offers the widest menu selection in the Gallery. It is open from Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. for breakfast (staff/interns/volunteers only) and 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for lunch, and on Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for lunch. The cafeteria is self-service at all times.

The *Espresso & Gelato Bar* is located next to the Cascade Café, in the Connecting Link. It is open Monday–Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and on Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The *Garden Café*, open Monday–Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Sunday, 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., is located on the Ground Floor near the West Building Shop. Throughout the concert season, the Garden Café serves food on Sundays from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The *Pavilion Café*, open Monday–Saturday, is located in the Sculpture Garden. Check the Gallery web site for seasonal hours.

Discounts

Upon presentation of your identification badge, you will receive a 20% discount on purchases in

the Gallery Shops and the Smithsonian Institution shops and a 30% discount at the National Gallery public dining facilities. As the Refectory is a private dining facility, there is no discount.

Volunteers may use Acoustiguide audio tours of special exhibitions free of charge. This offer extends to a volunteer's immediate family when they are accompanied by the volunteer.

Your badge also allows you access to the Smithsonian staff/associates' dining rooms at the Castle and National Museum of Natural History.

Many museums that charge admission will waive their fee as a courtesy to staff of other museums. Show your badge and inquire whether you may have courtesy admission, as well as a discount in their gift shop. The Walters Art Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Frick Collection, the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art generally offer courtesy admission.

Enrichment Trips

Volunteer groups often organize visits to other local museums, special exhibitions, artists' studios, private collections, and a number of tours and special travel programs outside the Washington area. These trips are not officially sponsored Gallery activities; however, volunteers should consult with their supervising division staff before making trip arrangements.

The Gallery encourages its volunteers to take advantage of the many social and recreational opportunities available to them. To the extent you participate as Gallery volunteers in any activities not specifically required by the Gallery as a volunteer activity, you agree that your participation in any such activities is at your own risk, and you hereby release and hold the Gallery, the Docents Organizing Committee, Art Information Committee, or any other volunteer organizing committee harmless from any and all liability in the event of any injury, damage or loss to yourself or to any other person or property relating to or in connection with such activities. This means that you (and not the Gallery) are responsible for anything that happens while participating in any such trip or activity. This is the same policy that applies to Gallery employees who participate as a group in outside activities that are not part of their Gallery employment.

Evaluation

Evaluation of volunteers by members of staff provides a climate that encourages learning and growth. Its premise is that staff offer support to volunteers by providing constructive and meaningful feedback, based on careful observation, presented in a professionally supportive and stimulating way.

Fitness Classes

Lunchtime fitness classes are available to staff and volunteers for a fee.

Lockers/Checkrooms

Checkrooms are located near the entrances in both East and West Buildings. Volunteers should hang their own coats in the back of the checkroom. Purses and bags may be locked in lockers in the Volunteer Lounge in the West Building. In the East Building, they should be left in the lockers in the checkroom.

Money Machine (ATM)

Public automated teller machines are installed in the Connecting Link on the concourse level between the Concourse Bookstore and restrooms, and in the West Building Gift Shop near the Garden Café.

Staff Art Exhibition

The National Gallery of Art and the NGA Recreation Association present a Staff Art Exhibition every other year. All employees and volunteers are invited to enter a single two-or three-dimensional work of art, completed within the last two years, to be exhibited in a non-public space at the Gallery.

Tax Benefit

The National Gallery of Art is a charitable organization (501c3) as defined in the Internal Revenue Code. While the value of volunteer service as such is not deductible, certain out of pocket expenses, as spelled out in IRS publication 561, incurred by volunteers in connection with such services are deductible as contributions to the National Gallery of Art.

Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony

Each spring the Gallery honors the contributions and achievements of its volunteers with a

special ceremony and celebration.

Vending Machines

Soda, juice, coffee, candy, popcorn, sandwiches, and other snacks are sold in the vending machines located on the Concourse of the Connecting Link. A vending machine with a smaller selection of drinks and snacks is also available on the Concourse of the East Building. A microwave is available for your use in the Cascade Café. The Break Room on the ground floor of the West building, off the corridor that runs parallel to the Gallery Shop on the south side, has vending machines and two microwaves.

Resources

Curatorial Records and Files

The Department of Curatorial Records and Files maintains object folders for all paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts in the Gallery's collection. Each folder is the most complete record possible of information about that particular work of art. The files are updated as new information becomes available. The department also maintains information files on prior owners of Gallery objects, including biographical information on major collections. This resource is located on the Fifth Level of the East Building, Room 517.

Library Research

Volunteers do not need an appointment to use the National Gallery of Art Library or the reading room. Books and other materials in the closed stacks may be requested at the Circulation Desk, and materials will be brought to the volunteer usually within a few minutes.

Volunteers are welcome to use the photocopier to copy library materials. Briefcases, bags, computer cases, purses, coats, hats, umbrellas, and books are not allowed in the library. For further information call the reference librarian at (202) 842-6588. The entrance to the library is located on the Ground Level of the East Building in the Study Center. Library hours are Monday, 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Tuesday–Friday 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except federal holidays.

Photocopier (Fifth Level Lobby)

A photocopier is available in the Fifth Floor lobby of the East Building for use by Division of Education volunteers. This copier is for Gallery related work only and can make color as well as black-and-white copies. Please be mindful that Division of Education staff have offices in the lobby and that they should not be disturbed. If you have questions about the photocopier or need supplies, please talk with the staff of your particular program. To maintain an environment conducive to work, conversations or meetings in the lobby area are discouraged.

Volunteer Lounge

Volunteers may use the Volunteer Lounge, which is located behind the Main Floor checkroom of the West Building. The lounge has lockers with keys, which are primarily intended for docents to secure belongings while giving a tour; the key must be returned at the end of each use.

The lounge also has a telephone, a coat rack, a photocopier, and reference books (which may not be removed from the room). There are files of docent texts and tour forms for use by docents only. Docents should never take the last copy of a text.

Just outside the lounge is a unisex restroom.

Lockers with keys are also available in the rear of the East Building checkroom.

Web site

The National Gallery of Art's Web site (www.nga.gov) makes available to the world the Gallery's extensive collection of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, and works on paper, spanning over 600 years of history from the Middle Ages to the present day. The site is an excellent source of information about the Gallery's permanent collection, special exhibitions, programs, and events.

A section of the Web site specifically for Gallery volunteers can be found at www.nga.gov/volunteer.